

6 DIY Ways to Whiten Your Teeth and Get a Movie-Star Smile

No harsh chemicals necessary

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It's that time of year again: You have to remain photo-ready from the first holiday party to the ringing of the New Year. Whitening your smile is imperative, but finding the time for a dentist visit isn't always in the cards. And sometimes, you don't want to apply a cocktail of chemicals to your teeth to make your pearly whites a little brighter. Luckily, you don't have to—just try these simple DIY alternatives.

1. Hydrogen Peroxide and Baking Soda Paste

"Baking soda and hydrogen peroxide are among the oldest at-home teeth whitening remedies," says Keith Arbeitman, a dentist at New York-based [Arbeitman and Shein](#). "People have found real results from rinsing with diluted hydrogen peroxide for a few seconds."

He also recommends mixing baking soda and hydrogen peroxide into a paste and using it in lieu of a traditional toothpaste. Simply add a few drops of three percent hydrogen peroxide to plain baking soda and mix it until it forms a paste—then apply it to your tooth brush as normal.

This shouldn't become your go-to paste, though, says dentist Gerry Curatola, of New York-based [Rejuvenation Dentistry](#). Because both ingredients are abrasive, he recommends using this home remedy for three to five days and then waiting three to six months before trying it again.

2. Strawberry Paste

"Strawberries contain malic acid, which is great for dissolving coffee, red wine, and tea stains on teeth," says Curatola.

Mash up one or two strawberries, and add about a teaspoon of baking soda. "Using a children's toothbrush [this helps to get between teeth better], rub this mix on your teeth for five to seven minutes. [After rinsing], floss out any strawberry seeds that still may be lingering between teeth."

Again, when used too often, the acid in the paste can cause teeth to erode and "ultimately making them more susceptible to staining," says dentist Angelika Shein, of Arbeitman and Shein—so don't use this remedy every day.

3. Banana Rub

"You can use the inside of a banana peel, which is rich in potassium, magnesium, manganese, and other minerals, to whiten teeth," says Curatola. "The rich minerals in a banana are absorbed into your enamel and have healthy whitening effects." After you brush and floss, he recommends peeling a ripe banana and then rubbing a piece of the inside on your teeth for two minutes. "Then rinse and repeat again before bed."

4. Apple Cider Vinegar Rinse

Curatola says that diluted apple cider vinegar helps any toothpaste "crank up its stain-busting power." He recommends diluting it with a ratio of three parts water to one part apple cider vinegar. Then mix it with an all-natural toothpaste and brush as usual.

5. Coconut Oil Paste

[Oil pulling](#) has been a huge trend, thanks to A-list celebs who do it, like Gwyneth Paltrow and Shailene Woodley. "Coconut oil contains fatty acids that are broken down into teeth whitening enzymes when they come in contact with human saliva," says Wayne Perry, CEO and lead product developer for [Greensations](#), a brand that exclusively sells all-natural beauty products. "The combination of your own saliva and these fatty acids produce an oxygen molecule that bonds to the stains on teeth. This oxidized free radical creates a chemical reaction that removes stains upon brushing and rinsing."

But swishing oil in your mouth for 20 minutes isn't for everyone. Perry offers a simple coconut oil paste recipe instead: First, heat one cup of coconut oil until it turns to a liquid. Then add two teaspoons of baking soda and five to 10 drops of natural spearmint essential oil into the liquid and mix. "The spearmint is for flavoring and to add antimicrobial benefits for healthy gums."

6. Charcoal Paste

Activated charcoal is one of the newest buzz terms because of its detoxifying benefits. Turns out, it's also a great DIY whitening solution, says Joseph Banker of Westfield, a dentist at New Jersey's [Creative Dental Care](#). He explains that the granules are very porous, binding bacteria before it stains the teeth.

"Mix charcoal with a small amount of water, and gently apply it to all the surfaces of the teeth," he says. "Leave the activated charcoal in place for two minutes, and then rinse with water until all of the charcoal is gone."